

## ***Gitanjali : A Vision of Psychic Quest***

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**I**ndo-Anglian literature is a very rhythmic quest of psychic identity. Rabindranath is a global identity to perceive the heart of indwelling reality by virtue of “Geet”. W.B. Yeats in his introduction to *Gitanjali* has cited the metaphorical assimilation of the children “building their houses with sand” and playing with “empty shells”. They know not how to swim, they know not how to cast nests; pearl fishers dive for pearls, while children gather pebbles and scatter them again. “They seek not for hidden treasures, they know not how to cast nest” (*Gitanjali*, Psalm 60). Yeats has a global recognition for his imagist occultism. There are three cognitions of psychic steps – waking, brimming and deep sleep and their experiences. It persists throughout the permanent and constant quest of Tagore. Yeats refers to the ephemeral ego of Tagore which has stirred his blood as nothing has for years. The subject therefore, is the witness of happiness even in the absence of all the tasted phenomena. The tasted witness of the enjoyment is the first realisation of his being endless. Ignorance of the real nature of the individual self is the “frail vessels”. It is the frail vessel of the body, being emptied again and again and correspondingly filled with fresh life. It is with this direct identity between the human and divine that Tagore starts his *Gitanjali* :

Thou hast made me endless,  
such is thy pleasure.  
This frail thou emptiest again and again,  
and fillest it ever with fresh life (Psalm 1)

Tagore realises the falseness of multiplicity. He wants to fill it with divine soul and subjective adoration. It is the “infinite gift which the poet searches through existence, consciousness, bliss, eternity, purity and the real nature of his self. It is the vision of his psychic quest – ‘self’ is the only one subject of the ‘Geet’. Everything else belongs to the world of subject. Tagore makes a relation of his self with that commander. The commander makes him realise the infinite self and this realisation brings tears to his eyes,” Pride I look to thy face and tears come to my eyes”.(2) Tagore comes to the realisation of the absolute by means of his music. The nature of his music is like far - spreading wing in which he forgets his own inner self, “I forget myself and call thee friend who are my lord”.(2) If the imprisoned soul is regarded as different from the soul set free, Tagore proceeds through his unlimited musical vision. Popularity appears through

a limited false vision only as such, it constitutes false knowledge.

Tagore constitutes the psychic stage of his pure consciousness with the individualised state of his "silent amazement." The music of his sense of individuality gets associated with the holy "stream of divine music." It breaks through all stony obstacles and rushes on the potentiality of absolute reality within. Tagore makes it clear that we must be free from three fold limitation in order "to get the psychic recognition of absolute reality". *Gitanjali* is the offering of individual consciousness by means of melody. Tagore is the superior aspirant of that ultimate reality which is self evident and changeless in nature. It is the activities of his 'Geet', the melody of self that gets illuminated with a perfect reciprocation of divine music, "the holy stream of thy music breaks through all stony obstacles (3). Tagore feels that his 'Geet' brings the discipline and discrimination both. This identity with truth is knowledge that kindles the light of reason in his mind. Yeats is burdened with a sense of personal responsibility in his "Byzantium" series. He gets disappointed with himself and with the faithless sterile world in which he lives. An intellectual dissatisfaction with himself and with his world in which Yeats views contemporary Byzantium world is hopelessly undearable. "The old man is a paltry thing." (*Selected Poems*, Sailing to Byzantium). Yeats has adequate faith in the inherent capacities of man, for which he secures regeneration by his own creative efforts. It is the stage which has been changed in his turn. He is transformed utterly. A terrible beauty is born :

Hearts with one purpose alone,  
Through summer and winter  
seem extended to a stone.(Easter 1916)

The most significant characteristic of Yeats's personality is his fastidious sensitiveness. It seems to regard Tagore's *Gitanjali* capable of highly masculine moral endeavour. He strongly asserts, "I read Rabindranath every day to read one line of his to forget all the troubles of world." (Introduction to *Gitanjali* ii) Yeats has a crystallised assertion of masculine potentiality which Earl of Surrey has exposed in his different sonnets like "My friend, the things that do attain. :

The faithful with without debate, such  
sleeps as may beguile the night.(74)

Tagore has rapt dedication to impersonal things which give him an upper

hand even to Petrarch and Dante. Yeats traces the tone and temper of *Gitanjali*. Tagore's chief response to the world around him shifts him to have a strength to act. Tagore views the world with three major spectacles, the popular view, the rational view and the absolute view. The popular standpoint is that of an ordinary man, he takes the world to be real. The second is the rational standpoint. He is not totally ignorant. He regards the world as explicable. He is forced to come to a halt, he confesses ignorance about his nature. It is the indirect knowledge of self. Tagore regards it as the super imposition of the ignorance. He cannot hide the consciousness of his ignorance :

And it shall be my endeavour to reveal  
thee in my action,  
knowing it is thy power gives me  
strength to act. (Psalm 4)

According to the standpoint of *Gitanjali* there is nothing to hide before the transcendental reality. *Gitanjali* re-iterates the fact that so long as duality remains it will hide our 'self'. We shall not be able to know our real being, though we know that our existence continues through all the states of empirical existence. Tagore feels that all appearances in reality are completely unreal. These are like a castle built in the air. These are a mirage seen in a desert. Away from the sight of divinity, his heart knows no rest, nor respite. My work becomes endless to it in a shoreless sea of toil. The world is not real as it is a reflection of pure consciousness. Just as reflection in the water below of a tree standing on the bank of a river is unsubstantial, similarly the world reflected in pure consciousness cannot be true. This knowledge of consciousness makes his vanity end, "My poet's vanity dies in shame before thy sight." (Psalm 7) Tagore feels that a super imposed object need not be similar in pure consciousness. Tagore's psychic quest is the quest for permanent happiness of a liberated life. When a man fails to realise the absolute intelligence with the nature of self, he is just like a fool to carry himself upon his shoulder. He is like a beggar to come to beg at his own door. Tagore has ascertained that pride can never approach to supreme self. It is from unity that duality seems to emerge. The restless mind comes out from the unchanging and all pervasive supreme self. It is the same song that finds a path in Keats's "Ode to a Nightingale".

Against the tyranny of didacticism Tagore tries to achieve perfection in formal expression. Life, nature and the most common things present perfection of godly realisation in *Gitanjali*. Tagore creates the perfect image

to express the truth of life not in form, but in purpose. Tagore is a painter to achieve delicacy and harmony in life with colour. It is a conception of art. Apart from *Gitanjali* in his other creative works like “Urvashi” and “Celestial Nymph” Tagore searches the eternal loveliness in the perfect protection of beauty. It is the most adorable of all created things. It is the desire of universe. It has no ties. It has no duty. It has no assignment in social context except to exist by the divine right of her beauty. Such a work of art can only be an end in itself. It is not the means to an end. It does not serve any primary social purpose except giving delight. It is the invitation of the self to this world festival, “ I have had my invitation to this world’s festival.”(Psalm 16) Tagore’s aesthetic quest starts with his longing to join the divine song.” My heart longs to join in thy song.” Tagore represents a reversion to Goethe’s ideals of self culture. It is contrary to the religion of progressive humanity where the world is broken in fragments in narrow domestic walls. In his oft-quoted psalm of *Gitanjali*, Tagore prays to lead his country to heaven of freedom :

Where the mind is without fear and  
the head is held high...  
Where the clear stream of reason has  
not lost its way in the dreary desert  
sand of dead habits (Psalm 30)

Tagore’s quest is the logical consequence of his psychic acceptance. It promotes a sort of aesthetic nihilism. He is a social creature to search a relation to real life. *Gitanjali* has an expression of divine gratitude. The mirror of life, which the artist holds upto the world is imperatively the mirror of his own mind. Tagore conceives the uniqueness of divine personality in different spectrum. He takes a “shelter in silent obscurity, where new melodies break forth from the heart and where the old tracks are lost, new country is revealed with its wonders.”(Psalm 37) Tagore is obsessed with his inner restlessness. It is a restless endeavour. It is a quest for unlimited breadth. Tagore cannot lose sight of his social context. It is his ultimate purpose to search every semblance(fragments) of life with a passing phenomenon. It is the plastic stress of his sensuous and ascetic mind that cleans and directs his imaginative power. By far it is a corresponding area of his accomplishment which starts as a voyage and ends in the supreme quest where there is a cry of unconscious psyche, “I want thee, only thee.”(Psalm 38) The poetic world of *Gitanjali* is not a literal transcription of Tagore’s perception of the natural world. It is conscious arrangement of the deep truth of divinity. Our poet does not permit things to rest in their complexity. He consciously imposes his self

to his restless psyche. It is mirrored through universe, idealised by love. It is the stage where incongruous and conflicting elements vanish. It is the ultimate offering of the poet – philosopher. The giver becomes a receiver and the receiver takes the position of the giver, “What hast thou to give to me.” (Psalm 50) Tagore seeks truth in poetry. *Gitanjali* becomes a poetic truth in which every perusal of creative imagination becomes synthetic and intuitional. It is vitally metaphoric in poetic language. It is a philosophy of creative process, where every “Geet” shifts towards a Quest. It is a Quest to catch the grasp. It is the relation to thoughts alone. It is a mirror, but that reflects nothing but his love. Tagore presents a relationship between inspiration and expression. His creative energy approximates the archetypal search of self. *Gitanjali* does not make it clear whether the search ends upto death or continues to his last offering to thee, “Death thy servant is at my door... In my desolate home only my forlorn self will remain in my last offering to thee. (Psalm 76)

Death is the physical void, but more than physical it is eternal transcendence of actuality. Tagore’s confidence in human personality expresses his absolute Quest of truth and beauty. It is beyond the scope of imagery. He gets face to face with this ultimate reality. He is unable to identify the absolute due to the darkness around him. It is a shadowy ambiguity of his perfect instinct, but the quest continues in every symbol of spiritual eye, where the great poet feels the softness of ‘this’ spiritual touch :

My forlorn self will remain as my last  
offering to thee.  
Milieu, mind and psychic Quest  
confluence with divinity. (Psalm 76)

*Gitanjali* provides specific experience with the most furnished thought of Indian epistemology. Translated into terms of life, Tagore springs out of his abiding passion and social relationship. His milieu is not only a world of imagination but a quest of self, seeking his reflection in the mirror of divine realisation. All the human impulses of creativity overlap into divine realisation by virtue of his imagination. Tagore feels the spirit of that master spirit to amplify his experiences. He extends his uplifting power. *Gitanjali* catches the spirit of the age. The proper milieu of *Gitanjali* is not only a social surrounding or an epoch or a climate but also a resultant interaction. The fundamental difference between the scriptural authority and Tagore’s realisation is a sure testimony of self through eternal, individual soul. It is just a dramatic monologue, where God is a silent listener. The expression of Tagore is natural, unlimited and joyful. It never

foregoes the sole experiences, the illusion of duality in the midst of his own indulgence. This is a state preceding right knowledge, right identity and right insight. Tagore discovers a transcendental nature. It is the nature of immensity and tranquility. It remains undiscovered. Tagore in attending the tanscendental glory of individual self reveals" a new country with its wonders." It is the rational investigation where our poet discovers a moment of spiritual search in delight to wait and watch. It is the investigation into the creative principle. Tagore finds in abstract meditation in sub-stratum for the illusionary world. His Quest creates space, time and direction with the wonderful power which the Pre-Raphaelites feel with superb work of Godly manifestation. D.G. Rossetti in his "The House of Life" views that eternity in the light of the spirit of his eyes. It makes him the distinction between perishability and imperishability :

The ground whirl of the perished leaves of hopes.  
The wind of death imperishable wings? (The Home of Life)

An object, that is not known by the subject through any of the recognised means of knowledge is said to be non-existent. The Pre-Raphaelites tried to reveal the oneness of consciousness, inevitably known by invitation. Tagore gets confluenced with his milieu, mind and psychic Quest. He feels to become one like that of homesick cranes flying night and day back to their mountain nests. It becomes a necessary corrective of his error and illusion. He unfolds his offering with the words, "yet all my life take its voyage to its eternal home in one salutation to thee."(Psalm 103) The social situation of the then India was that of a slave country. *Gitanjali* seems to determine the possibility of realisation of Indian aesthetic value".

#### **Works Cited**

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